

Letters Home

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Summary: Kate Walker has returned from her quest to help Hans Voralberg find Syberia. Now she takes stock of what it all meant and what kind of life she's going to have when she doesn't want to just go home. Set immediately after Syberia II. One-shot.

## Letters Home

Spring was coming to the wilds of central Europe as Kate Walker, sitting in the kitchen of the river lodge above Romansburg, poured herself a cup of tea.

She and Yuki had made it back to Romansburg long enough to stock up on some supplies and make sure that her aviator friend Boris had made it to safety there, which he had. She'd found out that this lodge was basically abandoned and had been for a number of years. It had held up well considering, and with Col. Emeliov's blessing, she'd moved herself and her furry companion in for a while.

It was morning, the river was rushing and there was a positive cacophany of birds singing outside. They'd woken Kate up after she'd been asleep for almost two days solid.

Her cellphone, its battery carefully rationed ever since leaving Valadilene, was finally about ready to give up the ghost, so she'd left a message on her mother's machine to expect a letter, and among the supplies she'd purchased was writing paper.

Well, you had to admire how far a few American greenbacks would get you even out here, she thought.

Taking another sip of tea, she neatly laid out a sheet of paper on the trestle table and began:

Dear Mom,

I hope you got my message; my phone's pretty nearly out of juice. I

wanted to let you know that I'm fine. Well, I don't know if 'fine' is really the word, but I'm not hurt and I've had the most incredible adventure! I want to make something of it, but I need to lay some groundwork before I do. I know it'll be tough to understand, but once I chase this down I'll have a chance to explain.

Yours with love,

Kate

She surveyed her letter. It seemed so brief, but all the things she wanted to share with her mom, all the things she had a right to know just wouldn't be adequately expressed on paper.

Colonel Emeliov had been arguing with Boris - something to do with spare parts - and they'd looked at her as if a ghost had walked into the store when she'd arrived.

"My dear lady," he'd exclaimed, "We had given up all hope of seeing you! It has been two weeks since you left us!"

Kate was astounded. She'd lost all sense of time since the race to reach the Yukols and then, finally, Syberia...

She'd ended up sharing a drink with them in the Cabaret, with Cirkos joining them on the house, and told them some - not all, but some - of what had happened. Even keeping the details minimal, she'd been unable to hold back tears when she told them that Hans had accomplished his quest, with the sacrifice of Oscar to see them on their way. She'd also told them of what happened to the villainous Ivan.

"Curse that conniving, money-grubbing dog," Cirkos cried, slamming his glass on the table.

"Fit fate for an enemy of the people," Boris said, glaring at his lemonade. Kate was extremely glad to see that the old pilot had stopped drinking, all things considered.

"Have that junkyard of his torn to the ground," Col. Emeliov opined.

"I'll have Igor out on his ear," Cirkos agreed.

"Is he back," asked Kate, surprised.

"I think so," Cirkos said, "There're snowmobile tracks and the gate's locked again."

"Don't be harsh to him," Kate said, "He's as much a victim of Ivan as anyone. Ivan left him lost in the wilderness. It's only a mercy he found his way back at all!"

Cirkos frowned at her, then his expression softened. "Quite right, Ms. Walker. Hans was a kind man, and wouldn't appreciate revenge on his behalf."

And then Kate had said, "It breaks my heart to say it, but the train's probably a write-off. Doesn't seem like anyone's about to repair the bridge, and the machinery's unwound and ice cold."

Boris brightened up, "but I could probably salvage some useful parts from it! Enough to get us off the ground. I mean, I don't quite know where you'd want to go, but..."

Kate had said she'd think about it. Then, after a moment's pause, Cirkos raised his glass and said, "To Hans Voralberg!"

"Hans!" Boris concurred.

"Hans," agreed Col. Emeliov.

"Hans," Kate said softly, "And Syberia."

She'd taken the gangcar back up to the lodge with the food, blankets and other supplies she'd gotten from Emeliov, and collapsed into bed for two days.

After finishing her tea, she stamped out to the inert train. After leaving Syberia behind and returning on the Mammoth Ark, she'd managed to get the train running and bring it back this far before it wound down for good, and she was sure she'd broken something without poor, wonderful Oscar to drive. She'd stood in the berth car and wiped away tears as she examined the mess of cogs, springs and tools Hans had populated it with. Boris would come up at some point to go over the place for parts, and she wanted to make sure he didn't take anything really important.

She got back into the lodge with a box full of such things, and laid them out despondently on the table.

She had the music box and the drums that played snippets relating the history between Hans and his late sister, Anna Voralberg. She had the precious little mammoth doll that, she realized, was the beginning to this whole thing. She even had a trinket or two from the Yukols like the Spirit Mask. And Yuki, of course. The bear-dog creature, who also doubled as the gangcar's engine, was currently curled up in front of the fireplace.

And, she realized a little guiltily, she'd found the paperwork for the sale of the Voralberg factory in Valadilene. She was almost tempted to burn it, but there was no point. The Varlbergs were gone. Anna was gone and Hans had found Syberia. The factory had done all that it needed.

She put her letter to her mother in one envelope and then folded the paperwork into another. And, after a moment, she laid out another sheet of blank paper and wrote, with some trepidation:

To Mr. Edward Marson,

Please find enclosed the paperwork for the sale of the Voralberg factory. I think you will find everything in order.

She debated saying something about being sorry for the delay, but no explanation she could think of really explained anything, so she didn't bother.

Instead, she wrote:

Unfortunately, at the same time I must give notice of my resignation from the firm of Marson and Lormont, effective immediately. I am proud to have earned a place of respect at such an excellent company, however my experience in the Voralberg affair has made me realize that it is time for a change.

I Am

Yours Most Sincerely,

Kate Walker

There, she thought. She'd done it. She'd tried, at first, to fight the realization, but from a buttoned-down Southern girl living in the big city, she'd become someone for whom the big city wasn't big enough. Not when there was a whole world to explore.

She sat back and looked mournfully at the relics she'd acquired during this madcap quest. She felt the want of some sort of closure. She was haunted by the question of 'now what?' She didn't want the life she'd had before. But that rushing, ennobling sense of purpose was gone with Hans. Hans, who, ill, absentminded and captivated by his success as he was, hadn't even said goodbye.

Now his story was at an end, and almost nobody but Kate knew about it. All she was left with was a stack of odds and ends that looked like a half-baked museum...

...exhibit.

Kate stared at the wall for a moment. She'd wanted everyone to understand, but known they wouldn't, about what had drawn her to Hans and his quest. She couldn't see a way of telling anyone back in New York. She wouldn't be believed.

But there was at least one person who would.

She hurriedly put all the music box drums, the doll and the other relics of her trip into a box, then got out a third sheet of paper.

To Professor Cornelius Pons, University of Barrockstadt,

I hope this message finds you well, Professor. I'm hoping to travel to Barrockstadt very soon. A lot has happened since we met and I attended your lecture. I'd like to meet with you about what's best to do with what I've seen and discovered. I'll be flying into town in a few days, all being well.

Regards,

Kate Walker

It was just a formal note. She might even get to Barrockstadt before it. But her mind was abuzz. She knew Prof. Pons would be very interested in her discovery. They'd have to be careful, but she knew a couple of good publishing houses that the firm had represented, and with his research cred behind it...

"Hans," she whispered, "I'll make sure you and your family are

remembered at least." Then she rose and began collecting her things, calling, "Come on, Yuki, we're going to Barrockstadt!"

End  
file.